

Creating Comics to Think Critically

This session provides strategies global educators can use to help English language learners create comics as a means of developing their language and critical thinking skills.

During this presentation, we will:

- learn how comics tell stories and ways in which comic readers process information
- explore how learners can make their own comics to demonstrate problem solving and communication skills
- consider how learners can create memoirs and non-fiction
- address how educators can take advantage of the link between genre fiction (science fiction, fantasy, super heroics, mystery, etc.) and comics



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE



Dan Ryder



Dan is the Success and Innovation Center Director at the Mt. Blue Campus in Farmington, Maine, where he has taught for 20 years.

Co-author of 2017's *Intention: Critical Creativity in the Classroom*, he presents his work on critical creativity and empathy-fueled problem solving all over the United States. Dan is an Apple Distinguished Educator and recipient of the National Education Association Foundation's Horace Mann Award for Teaching Excellence.

His recent work for the U.S. Department of State's Office of English Language Programs includes developing a comic book to support educators using comic creation as a tool for critical thinking and language acquisition.



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CREATING COMICS TO THINK CRITICALLY



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OUR SESSION

PART 1: How We Experience Comic Books

PART 2: How Comic Books Work

PART 3: How to Make Comic Books

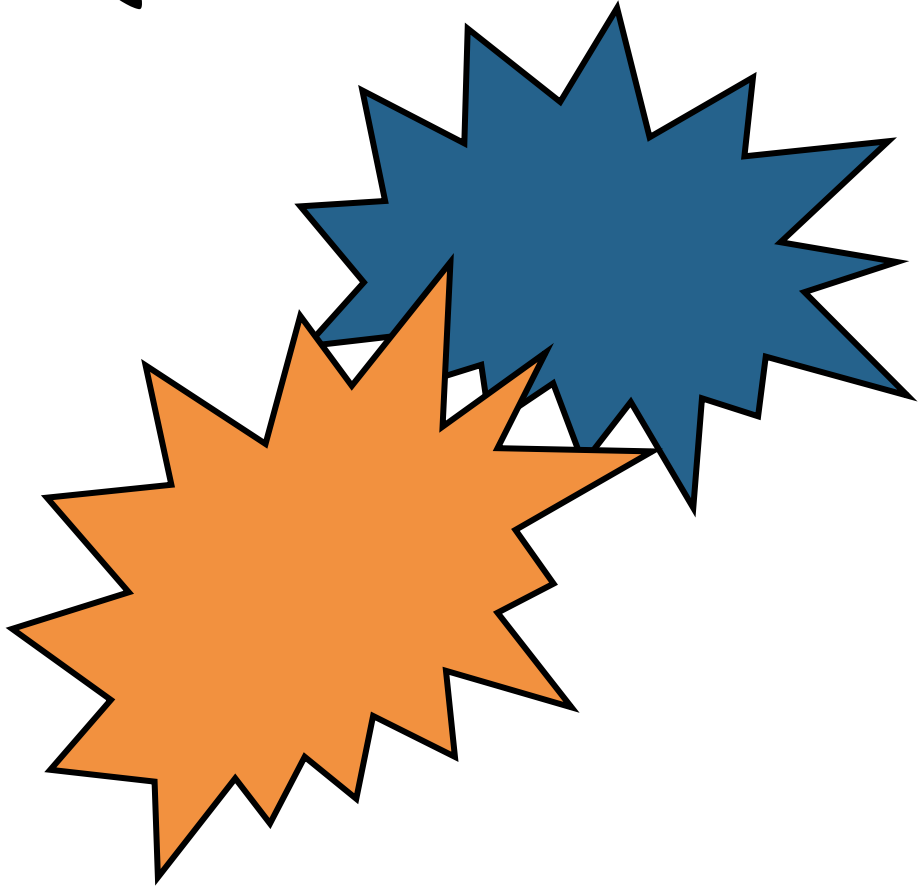
PART 4: How to Think with Comic Books

PART 1: How We Experience Comic Books



Art by Josh Alves from forthcoming American English publication Creating Comics to Critically Think

QUESTION!



**How might you find out
what your students
already know about
making comics?**

K-W-L CHART

Step 1: Students
make a chart
that lists what
they already
KNOW

Step 2:
Students list
what they
WANT to
KNOW

Step 3:
Students list
what they
LEARNED

K-W-L CHART

What do you KNOW about making comics?

Superheroes

Tin Tin

Word balloons

Lots of movies about comics

What do you WANT to know about making comics?

Are cartoons and comics the same thing?

Do you read the words or pictures first?

Are there comics about baseball?


What have you LEARNED about making comics this lesson?

Anyone can make comics

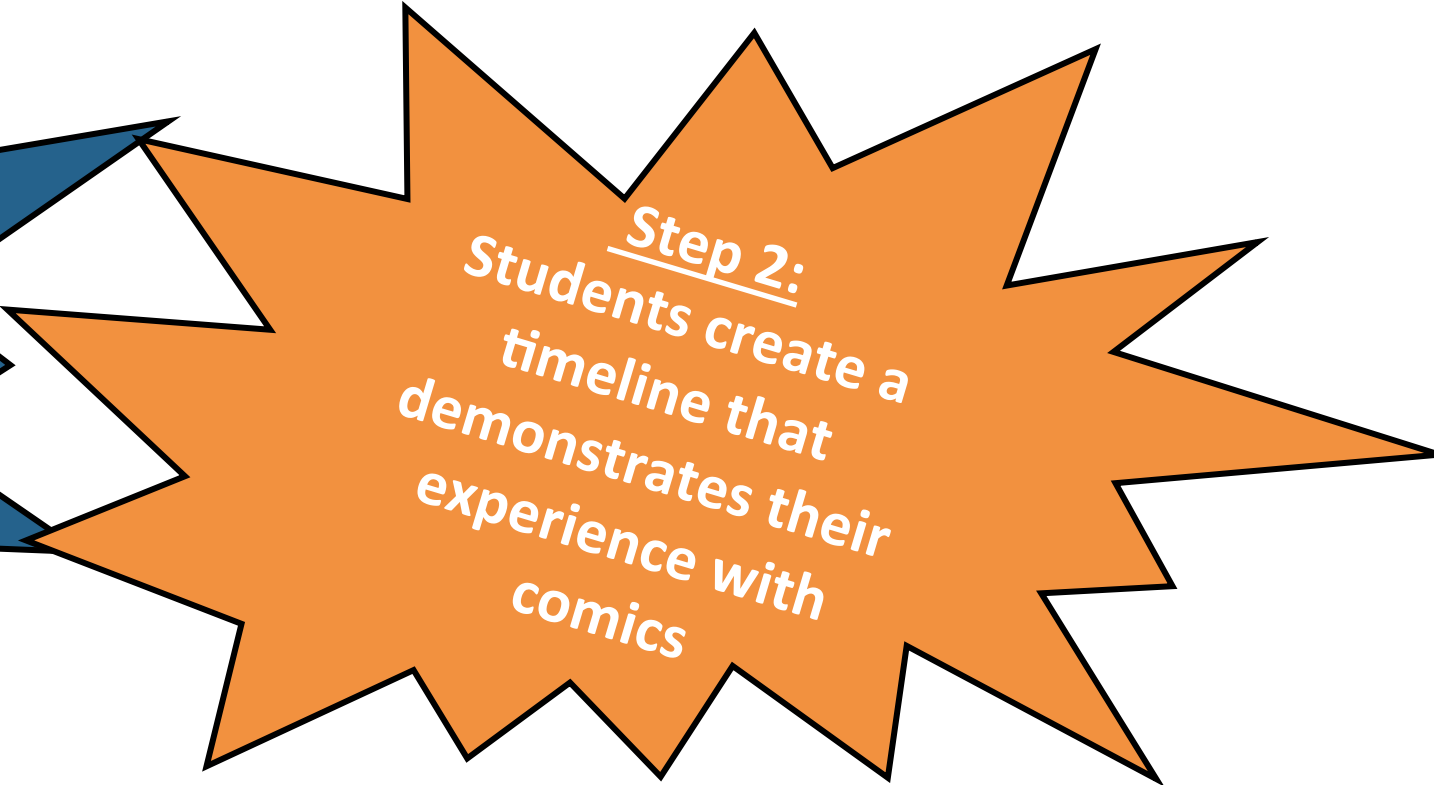
Making comics helps us think about solving problems

Comics helps us learn language

TIMELINE

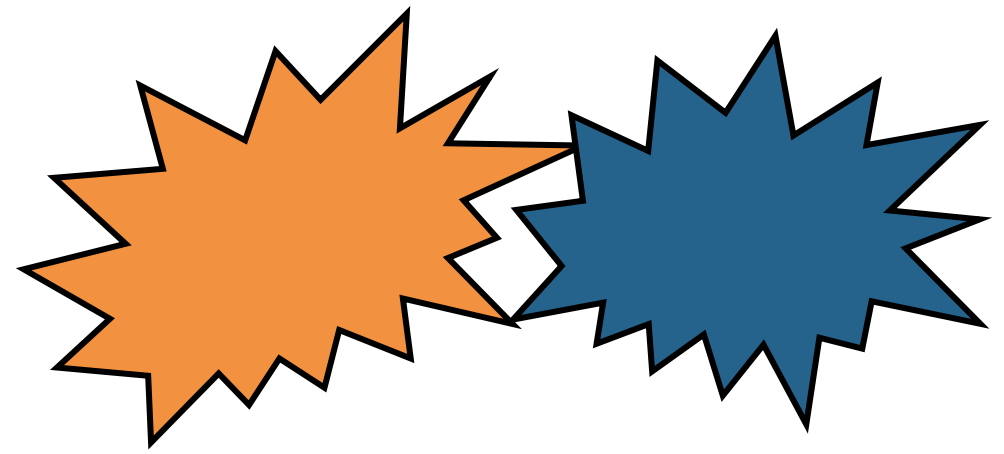


Step 1:
Students
brainstorm and
reflect on
experiences with
comics



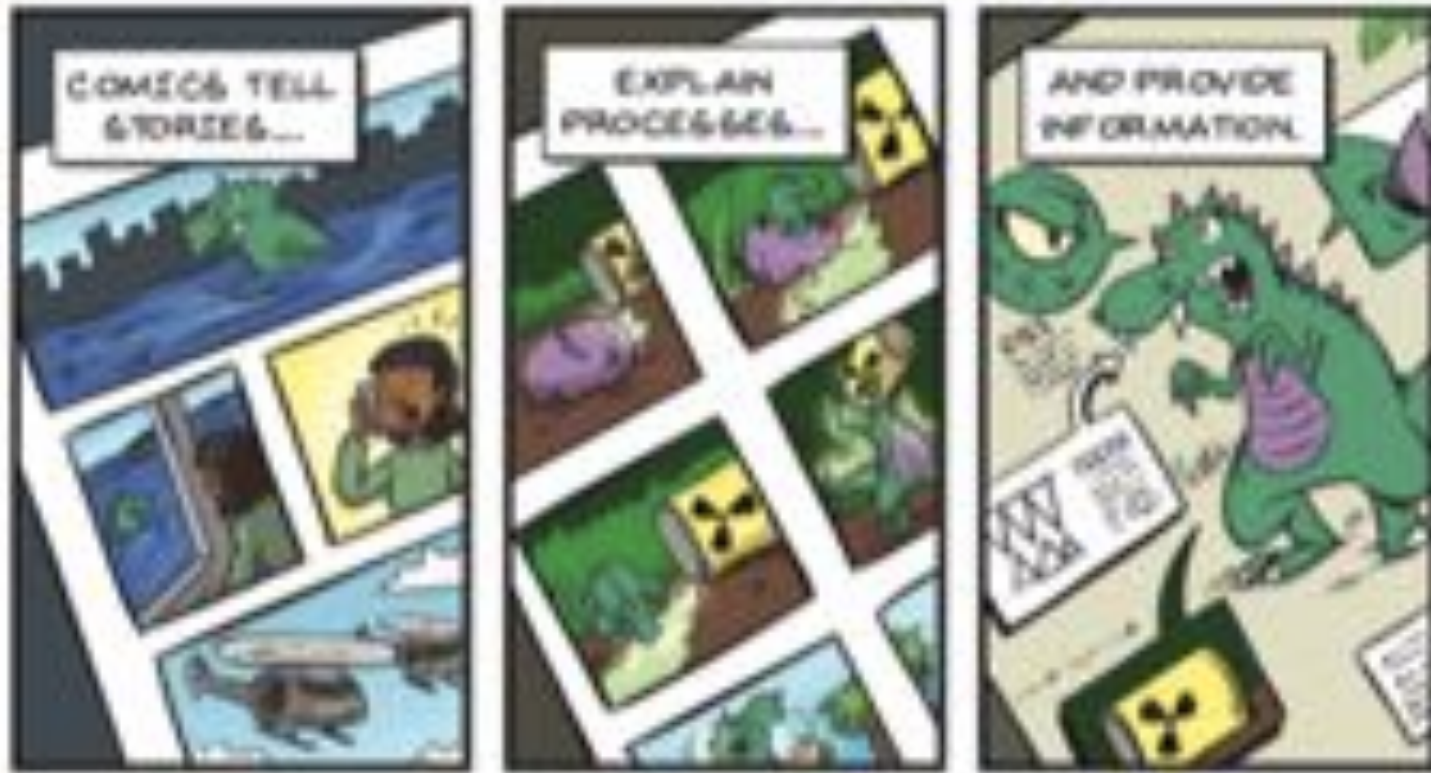
Step 2:
Students create a
timeline that
demonstrates their
experience with
comics

QUESTION!



**What are some of your
experiences with comic
books?**

PART 2: How Comic Books Work

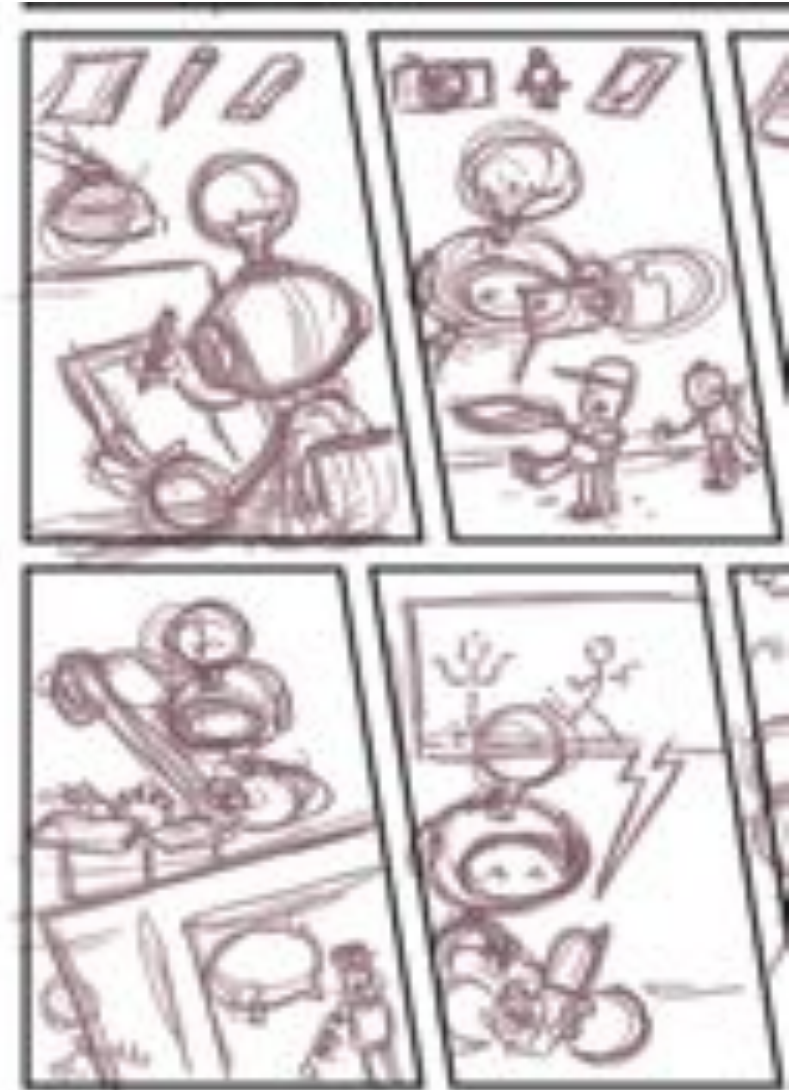


Art by Josh Alves from forthcoming American English publication Creating Comics to Critically Think

PART 2: How Comic Books Work

- Panels
- Pictures
- Word Balloons
- Thought Bubbles
- Captions

**Comic book creators create relationships
between those elements**



PART 2: How Comic Books Work

**The magic of
comics is in
the gutters**



PART 2: How Comic Books Work

**Our brains fill the
spaces between the
panels with
our imagination**



PART 2: How Comic Books Work

**Comics have worked
this way for centuries**

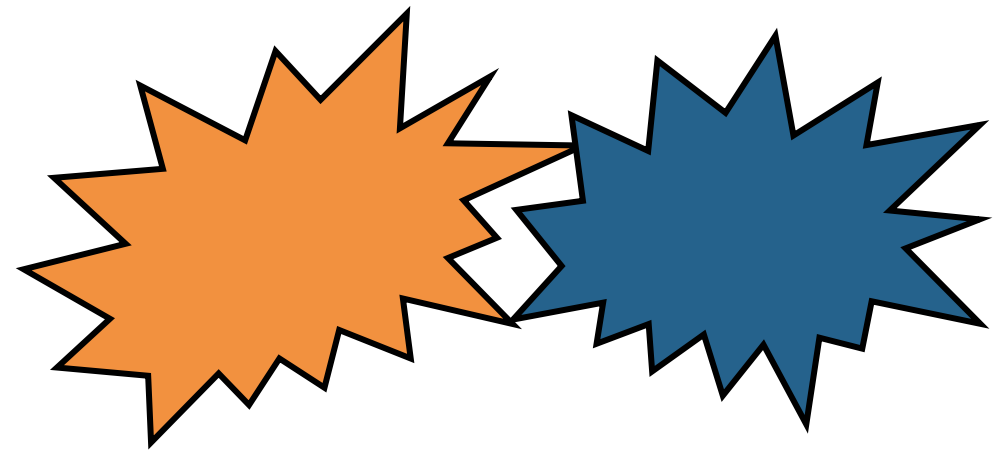


PART 3: HOW TO MAKE COMICS



Art by Josh Alves from forthcoming American English publication Creating Comics to Critically Think

QUESTION!



**In what ways might creating comics
be difficult for your students?**

PART 3: HOW TO MAKE COMICS

Should students start with the art?

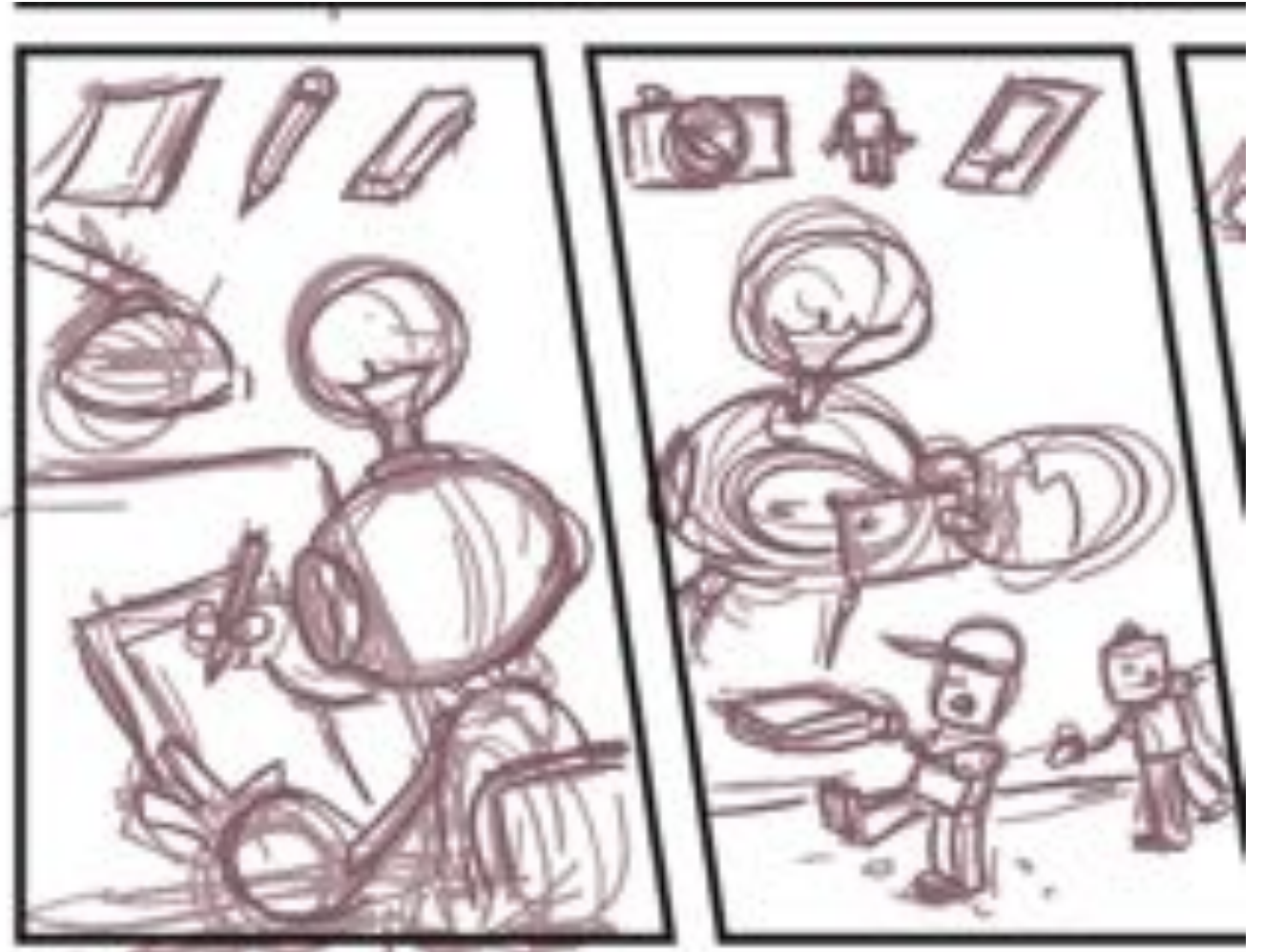
Should students start with the words?

Should students start with the story?

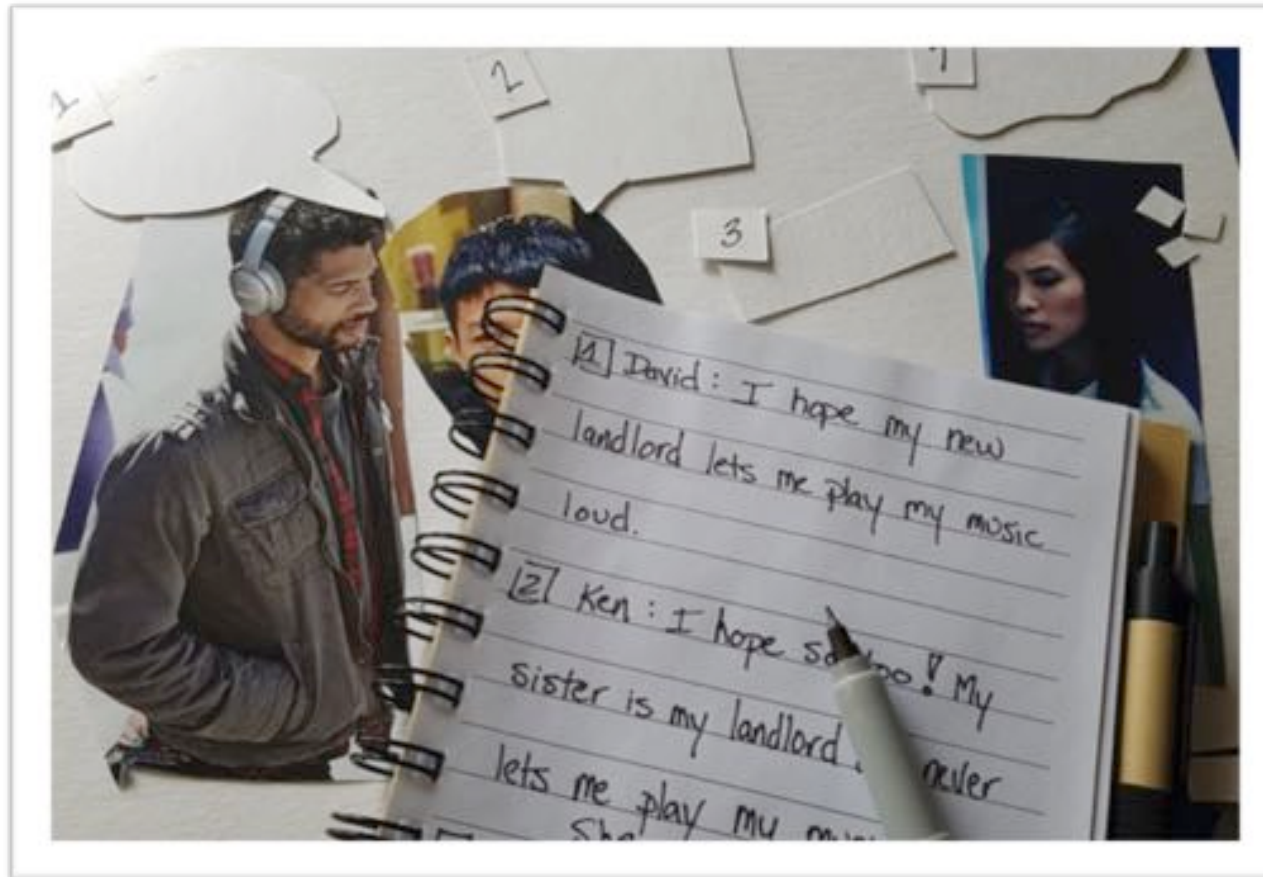
It doesn't matter where students start.

PART 3: HOW TO MAKE COMICS

Any way your students make comics is the right way to make comics.



WORD BALLOON REARRANGE



WORD BALLOON REARRANGE

Step 1:
Cut out word
balloon, thought
bubble, and
caption shapes



WORD BALLOON REARRANGE

Step 2:
Cut out photos
of people
from newspaper
s and magazines



WORD BALLOON REARRANGE

Step 3:
Arrange the
shapes



WORD BALLOON REARRANGE

Step 4:
Add dialogue,
thought, and
narration

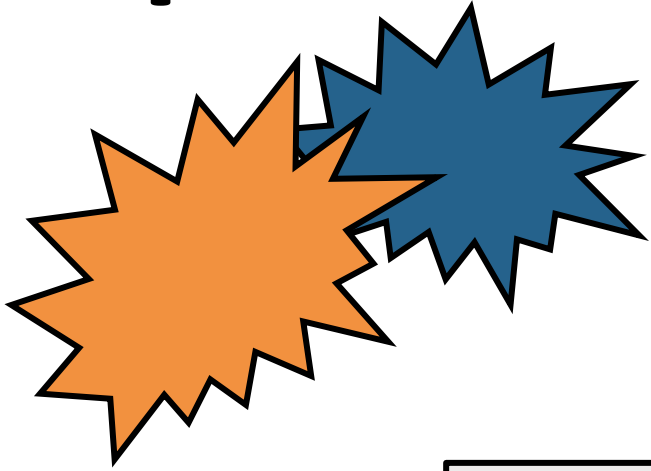
May I please
have one
large coffee
with sugar?



How do I tell him we
are out of sugar?



Tip!

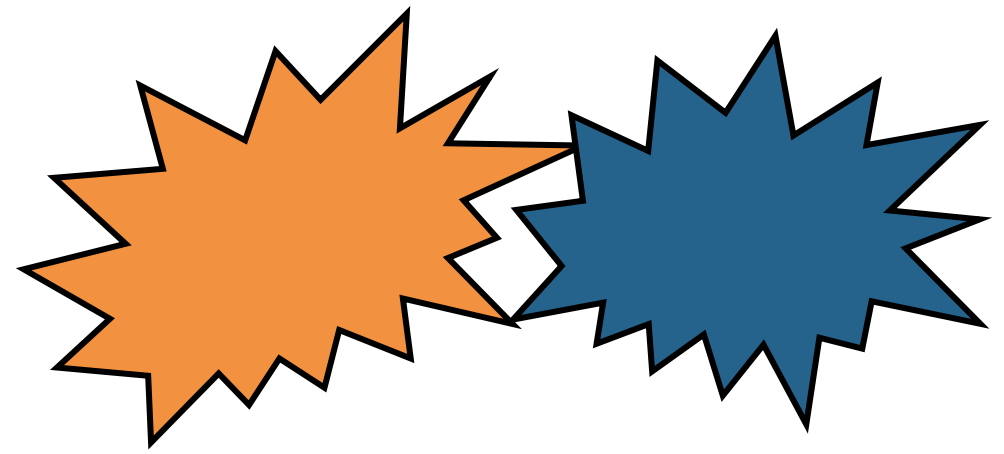


WORD BALLOON REARRANGE

Concerned about materials?

Write the script on separate paper
and reuse the cut outs

QUESTION!



**What tools and materials are
available to your students for making
comics?**

PART 3: How to Make Comics

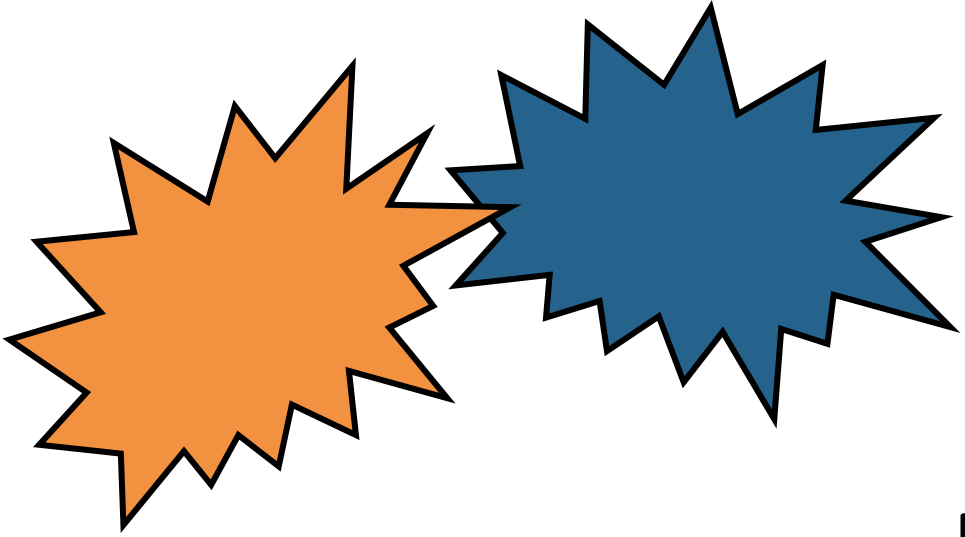
Art Supplies

Digital Tools

Found Materials



QUESTION!



**What are some English
skills you could practice by
making comics?**

PART 4: How to Think with Comics



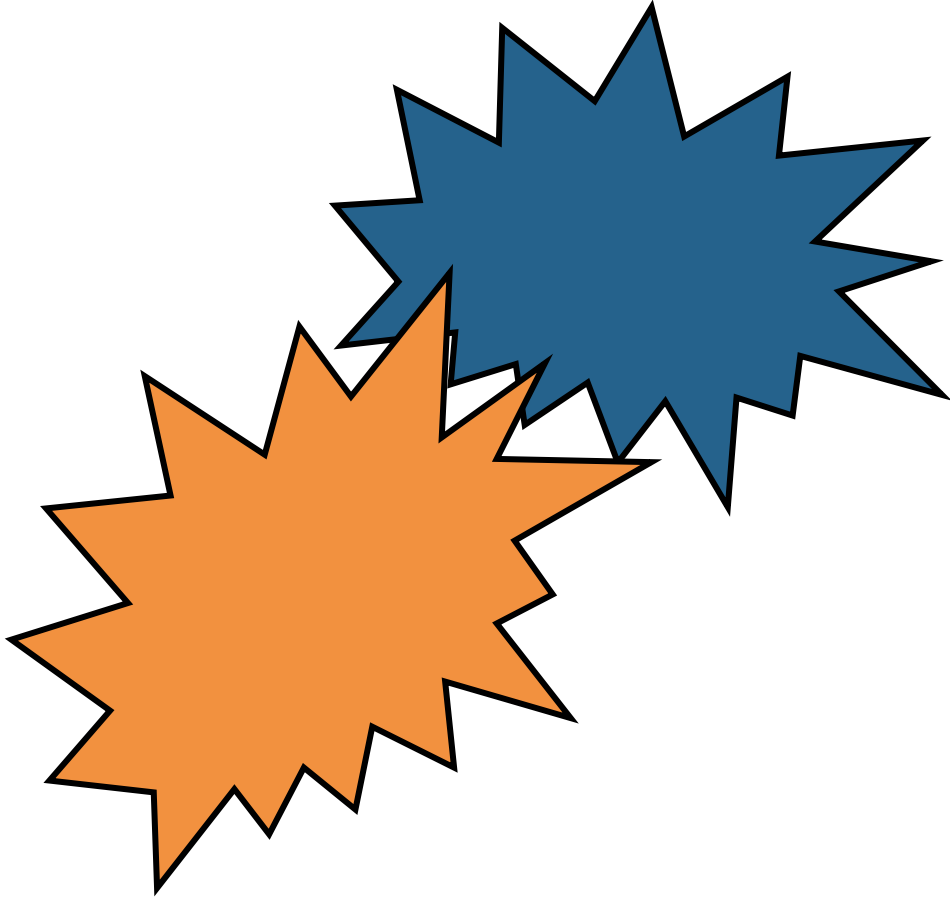
PART 4: How to Think with Comics

FOUR Ways to Develop and Express Ideas

1. Compare Two Experiences
2. Connect Learning to Life
3. Make Decisions
4. Empathize with Others

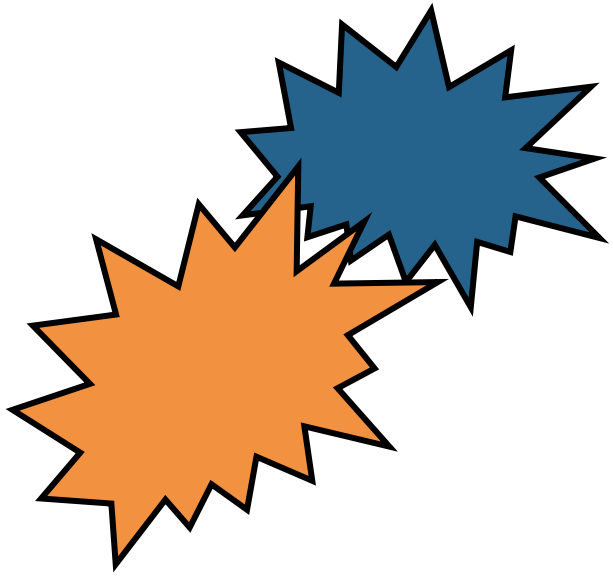


QUESTION!

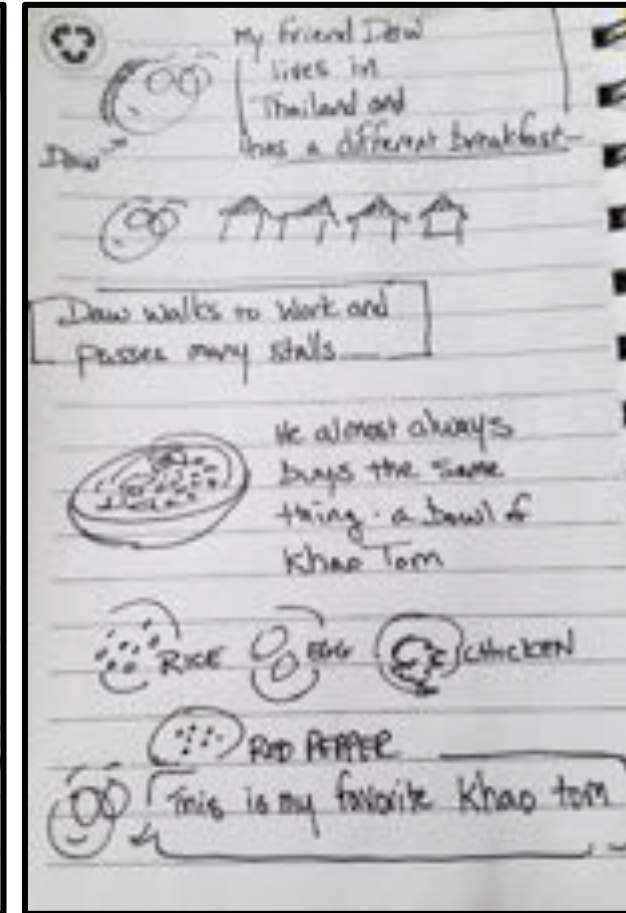


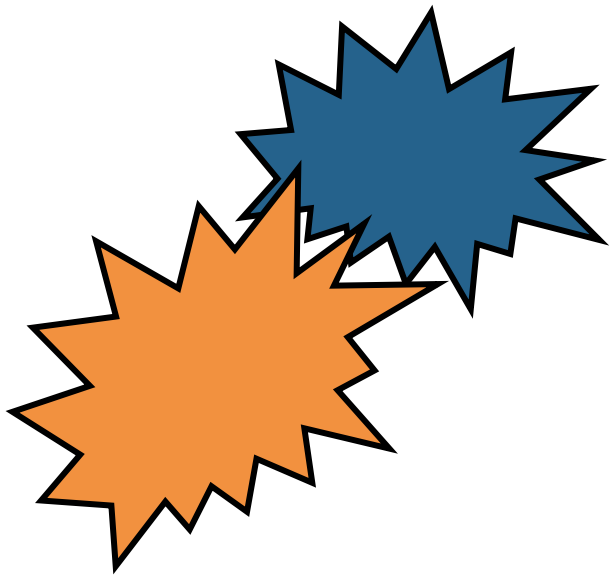
**How might students
show their understanding
of American culture by
making comics?**

Compare Two Experiences



Create a comic that compares your students' daily routines to an American student's daily routine

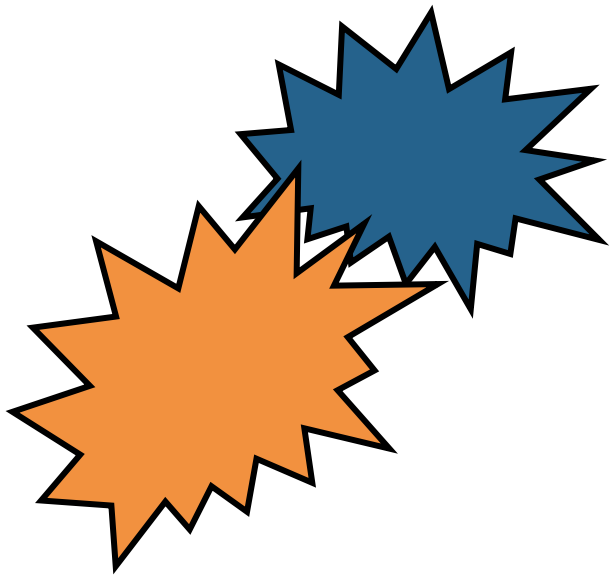




**Ask your students to
make a list of
their routines
throughout the day.**

Compare Two Experiences

MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breakfast• Getting dressed• Washing• Going to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lunch• Meeting with friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dinner• Checking social media• Reading

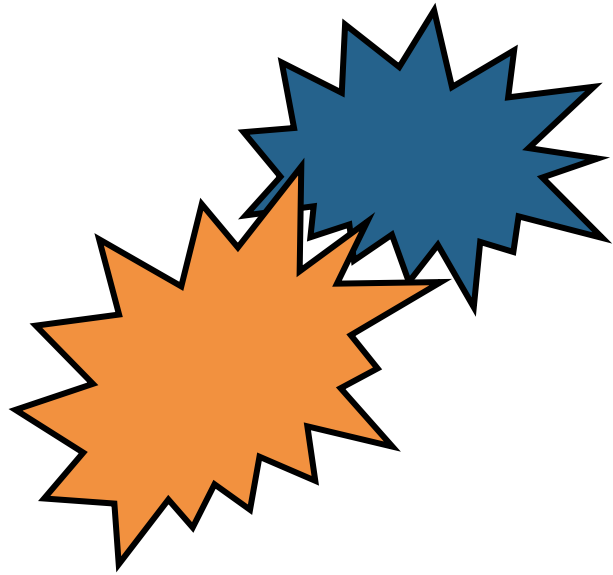


**Choose one from the list
to compare to a typical
American routine**

Compare Two Experiences

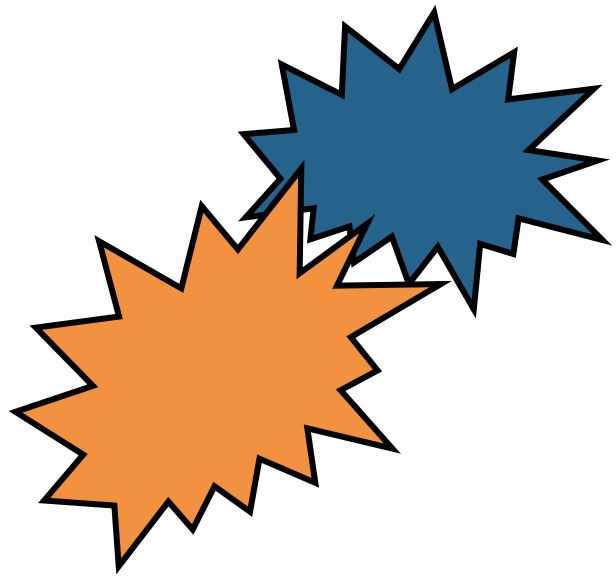
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Compare Two Experiences



Ask your students to
make a one-page comic
of their daily routine

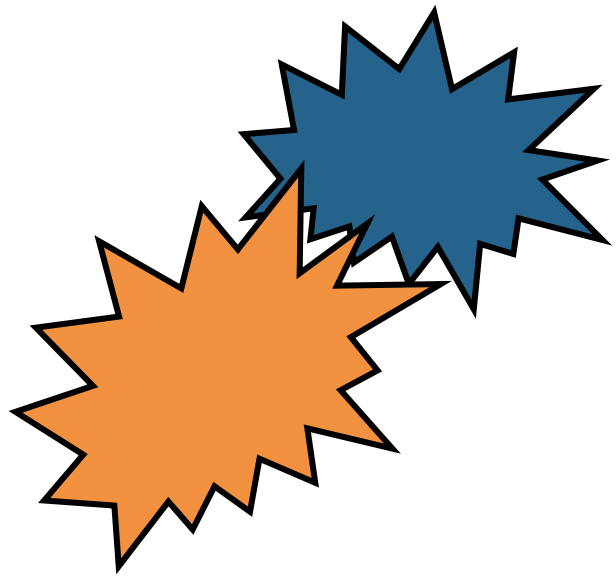




**Ask students to research
and make one-page
comics of American
routines**

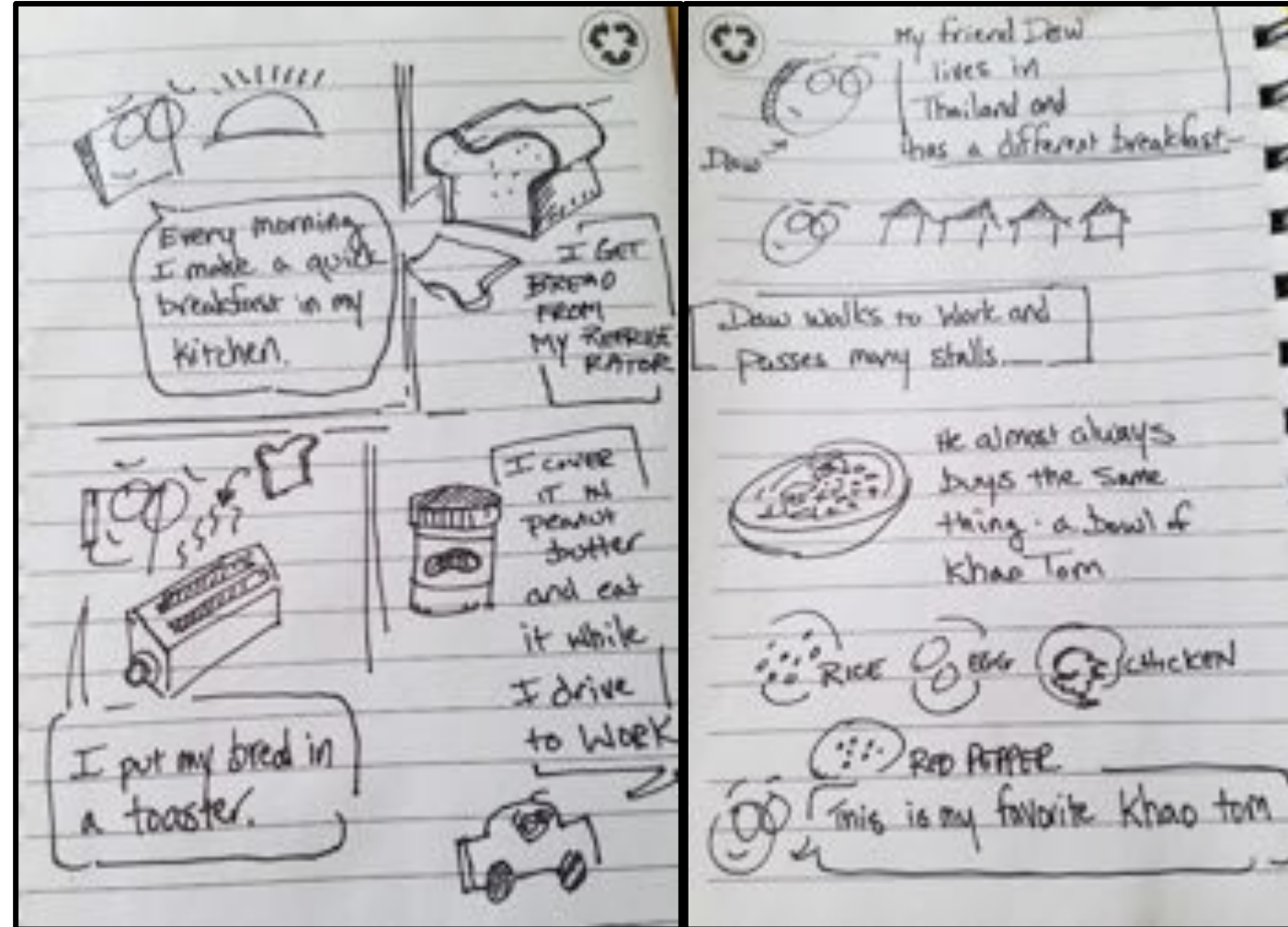
Compare Two Experiences



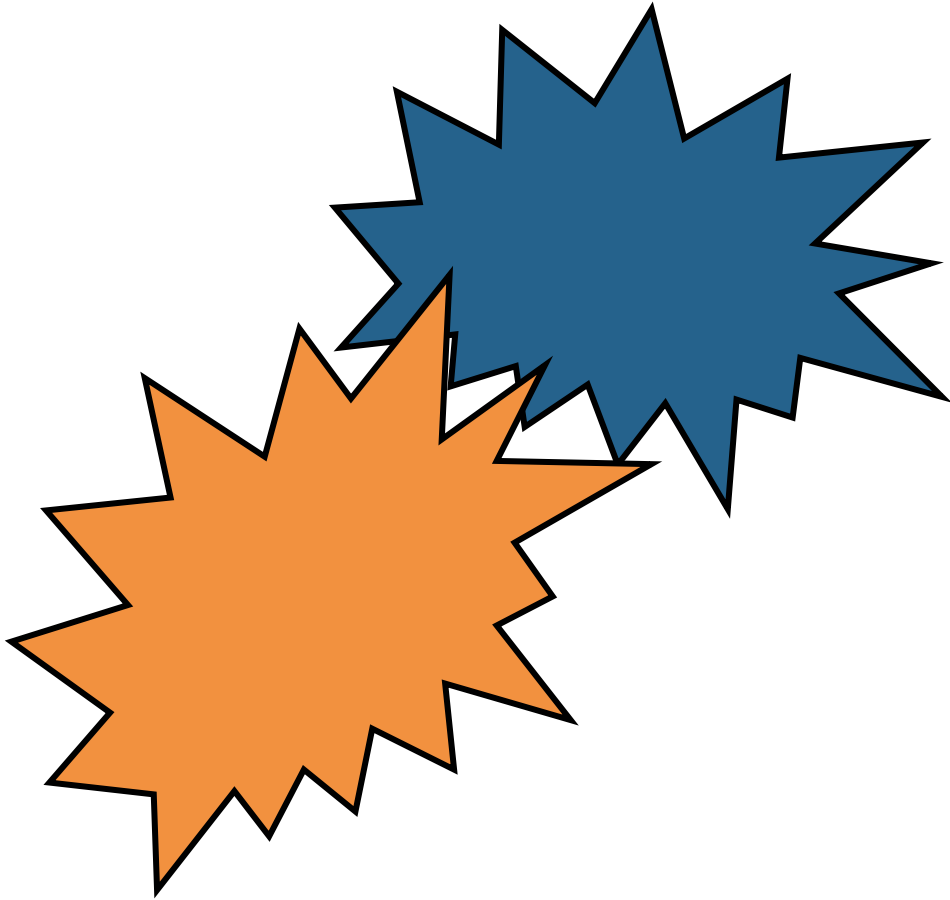


Compare the two side
by side and discuss

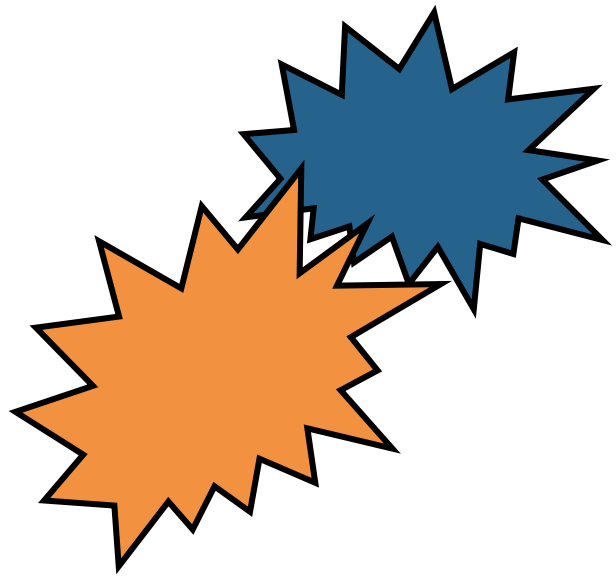
Compare Two Experiences



QUESTION!



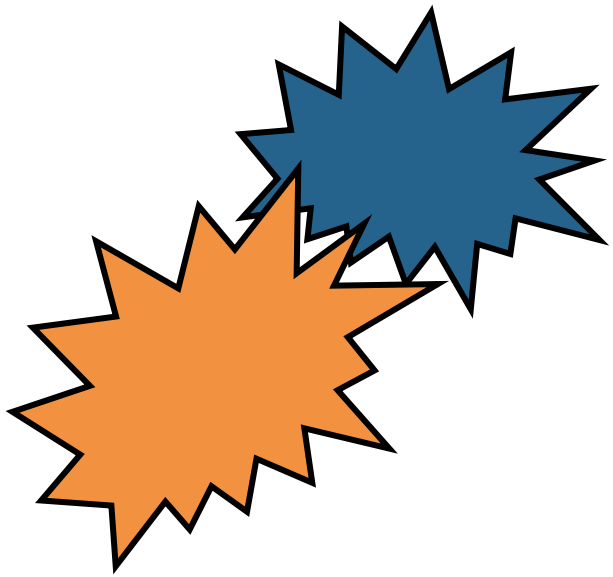
**How might students
create comics to connect
their new English skills
to their day to day lives?**



**Create a story showing
how your new English
skills can be used in your
day to day life**

Connect Learning to Life





**Ask students to list their
new vocabulary**

Connect Learning to Life

LANGUAGE
OF
DIRECTIONS

RIGHT →
LEFT ←
STRAIGHT ↑

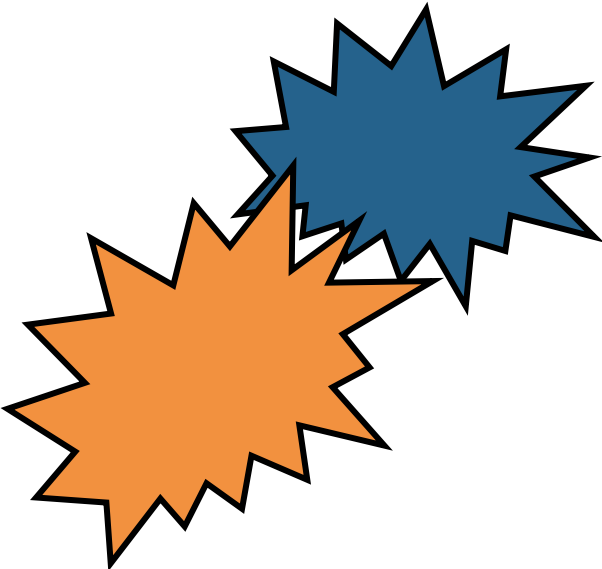
GO [Diagram showing a path from a person to a box]

ABOUT [Diagram showing a path from a person to a box with a wavy line]

WHERE [Diagram showing a person in a box with question marks]

How do I GET
TO _____? [Diagram showing a path to a box labeled 'GO']

Connect Learning to Life

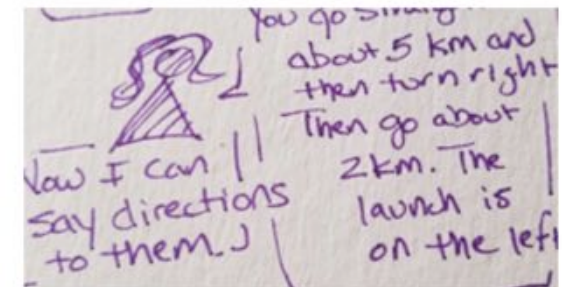
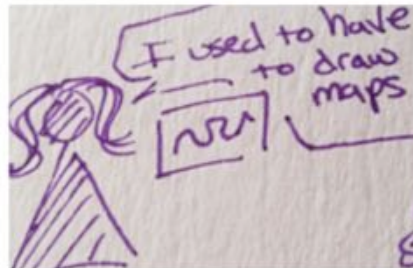
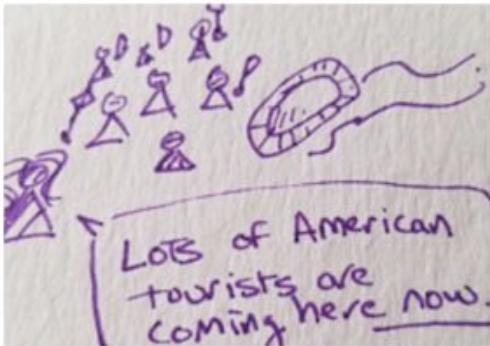
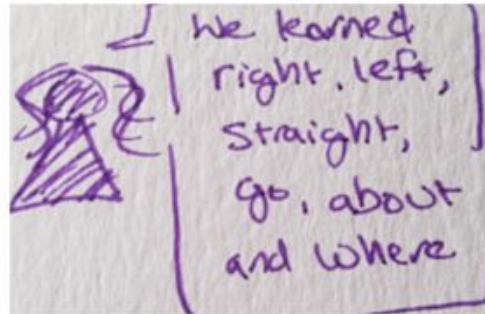
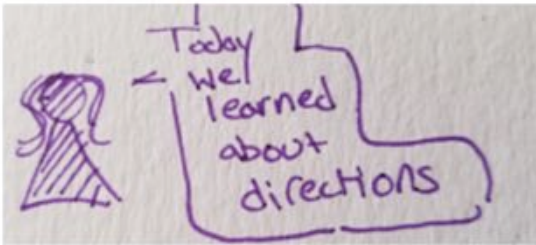


Ask students to identify situations in their lives where they could use that vocabulary



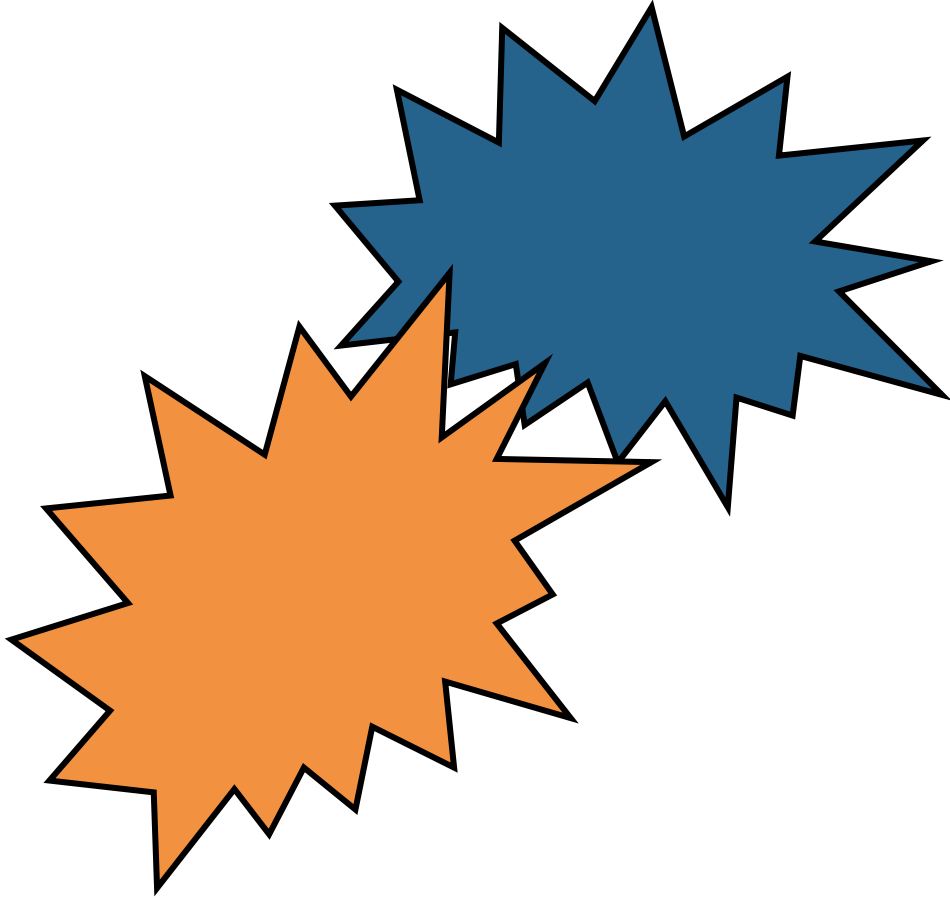
Connect Learning to Life

Ask students to create a one-page comic that shows them using their new vocabulary

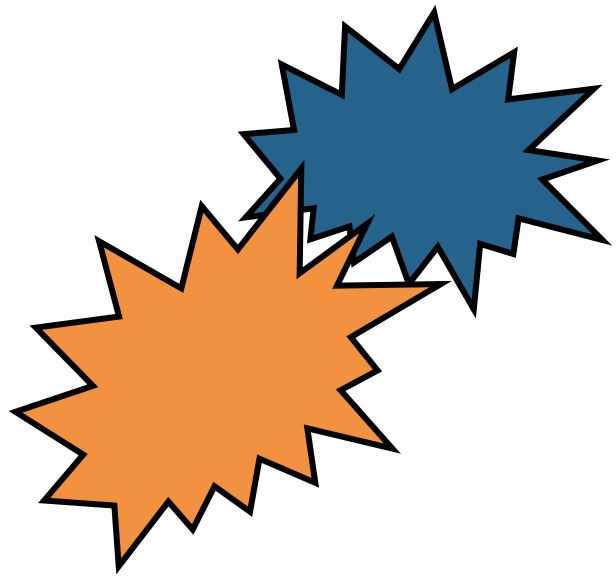


You go straight about 5 km and then turn right. Then go about 2 km. The launch is on the left.

QUESTION!

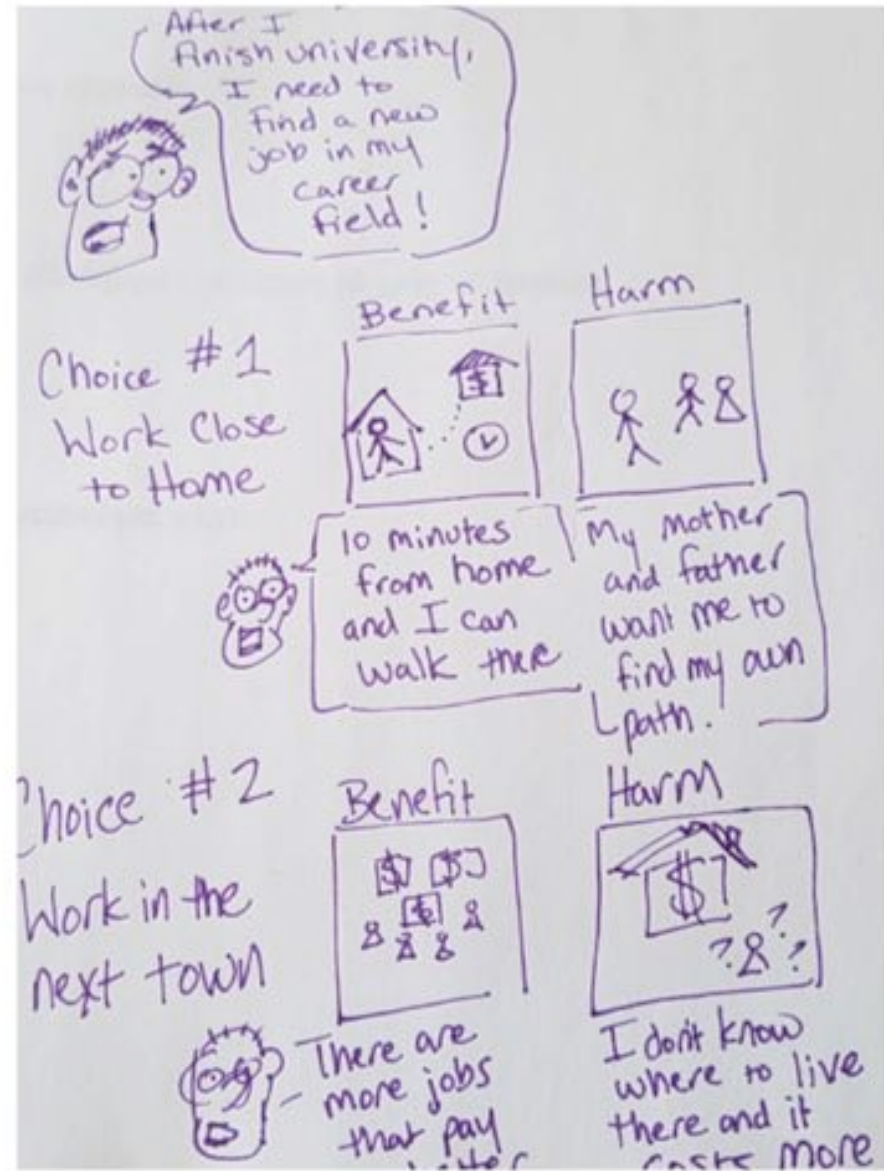


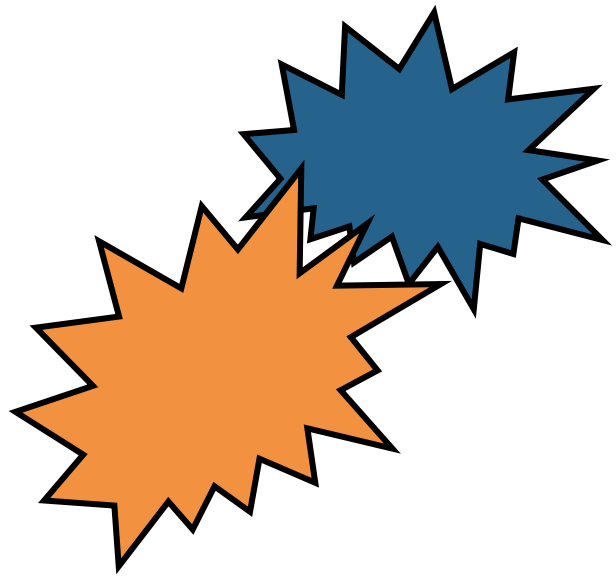
**How might students create
comics to help them make
decisions?**



Create a comic that shows the benefits and harms of two or more different choices.

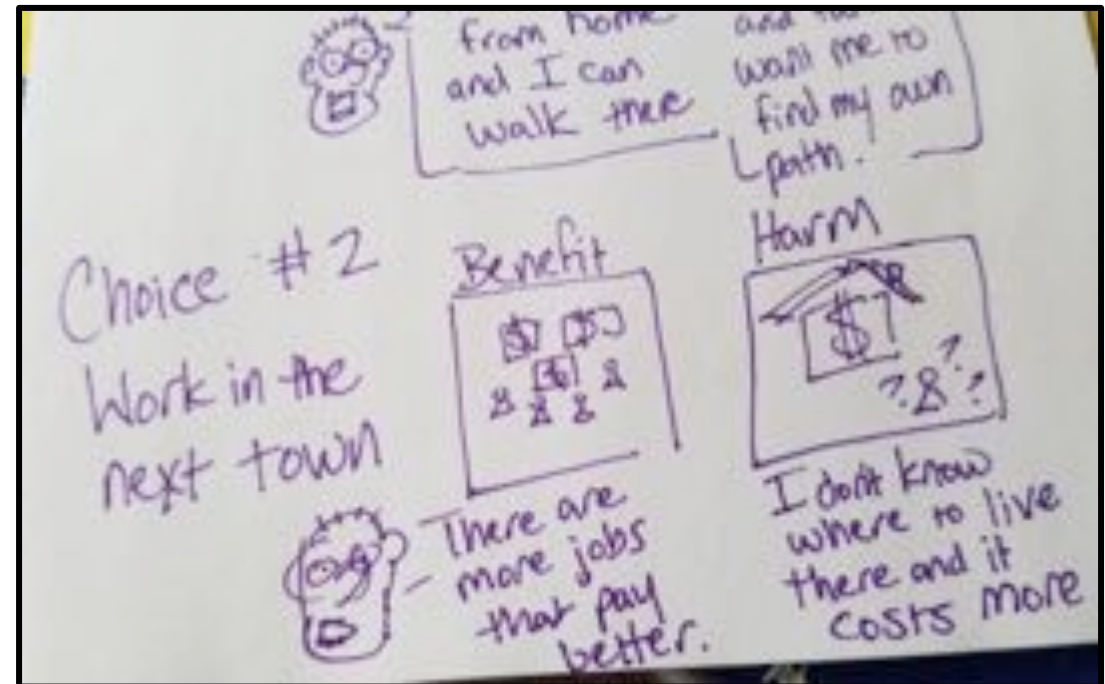
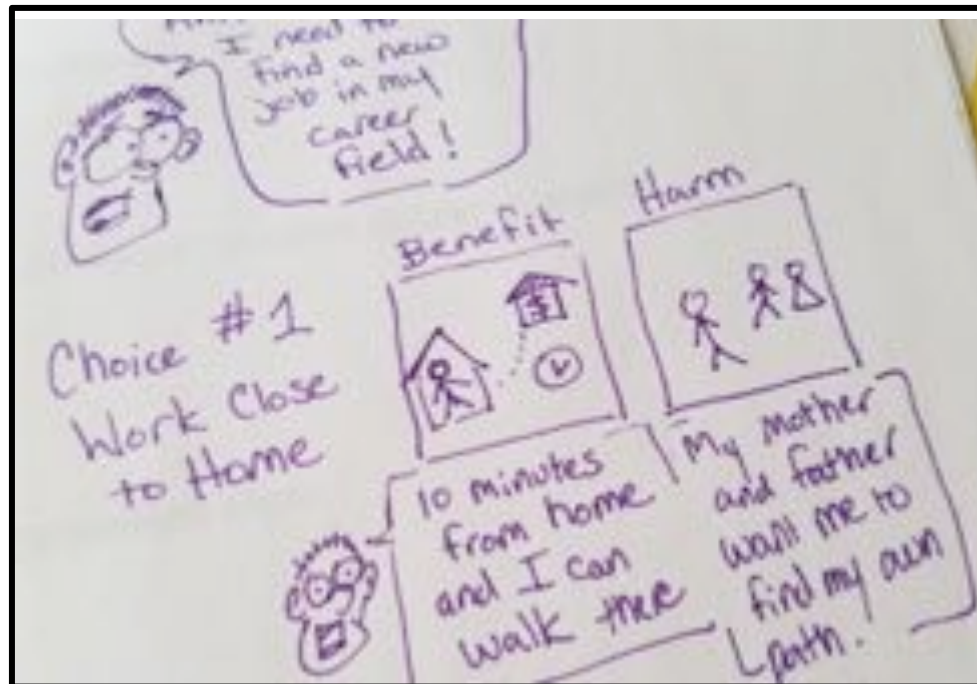
Predict Possible Outcomes

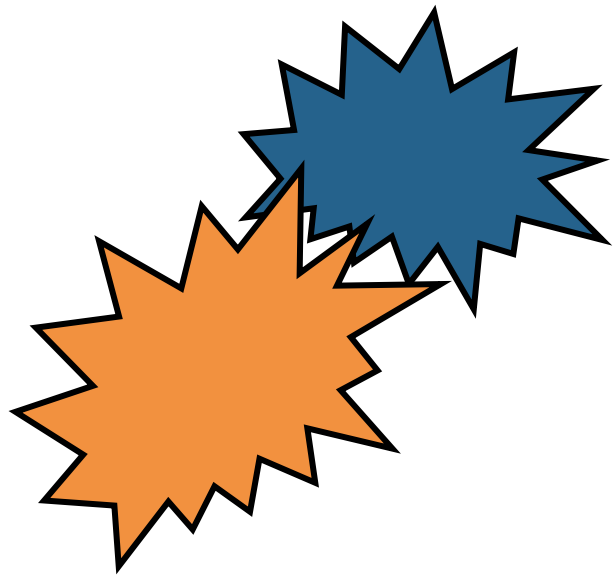




Predict Possible Outcomes

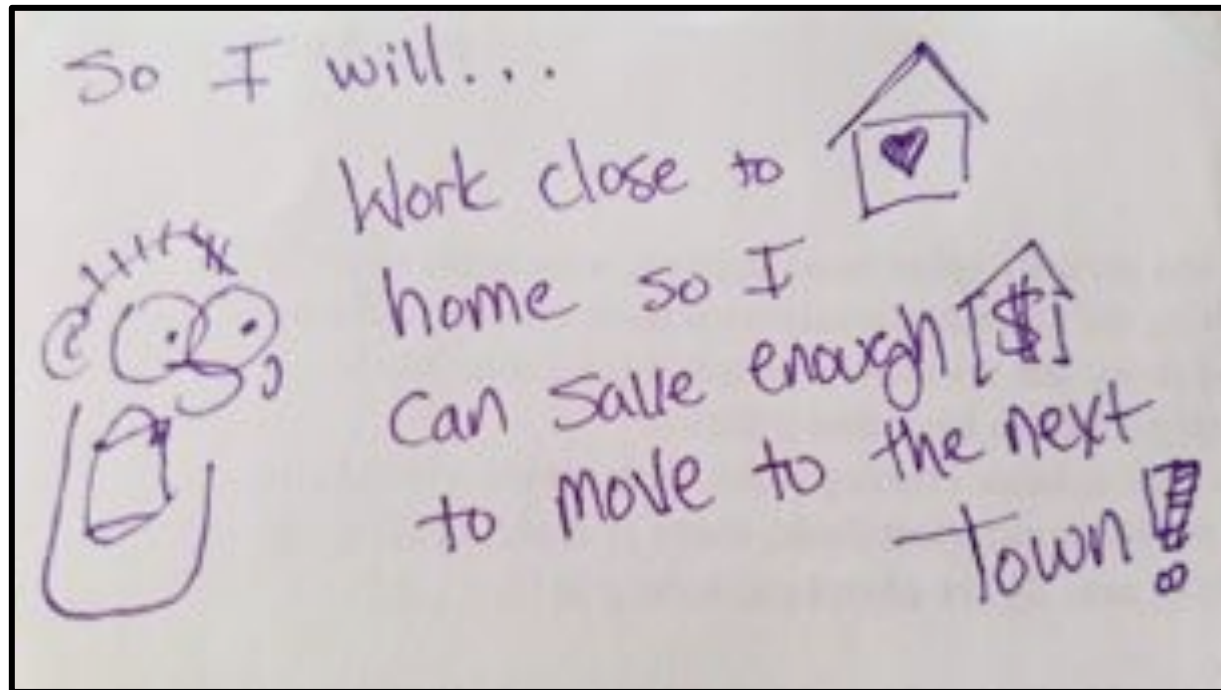
Ask students to identify potential benefits and harms of each choice



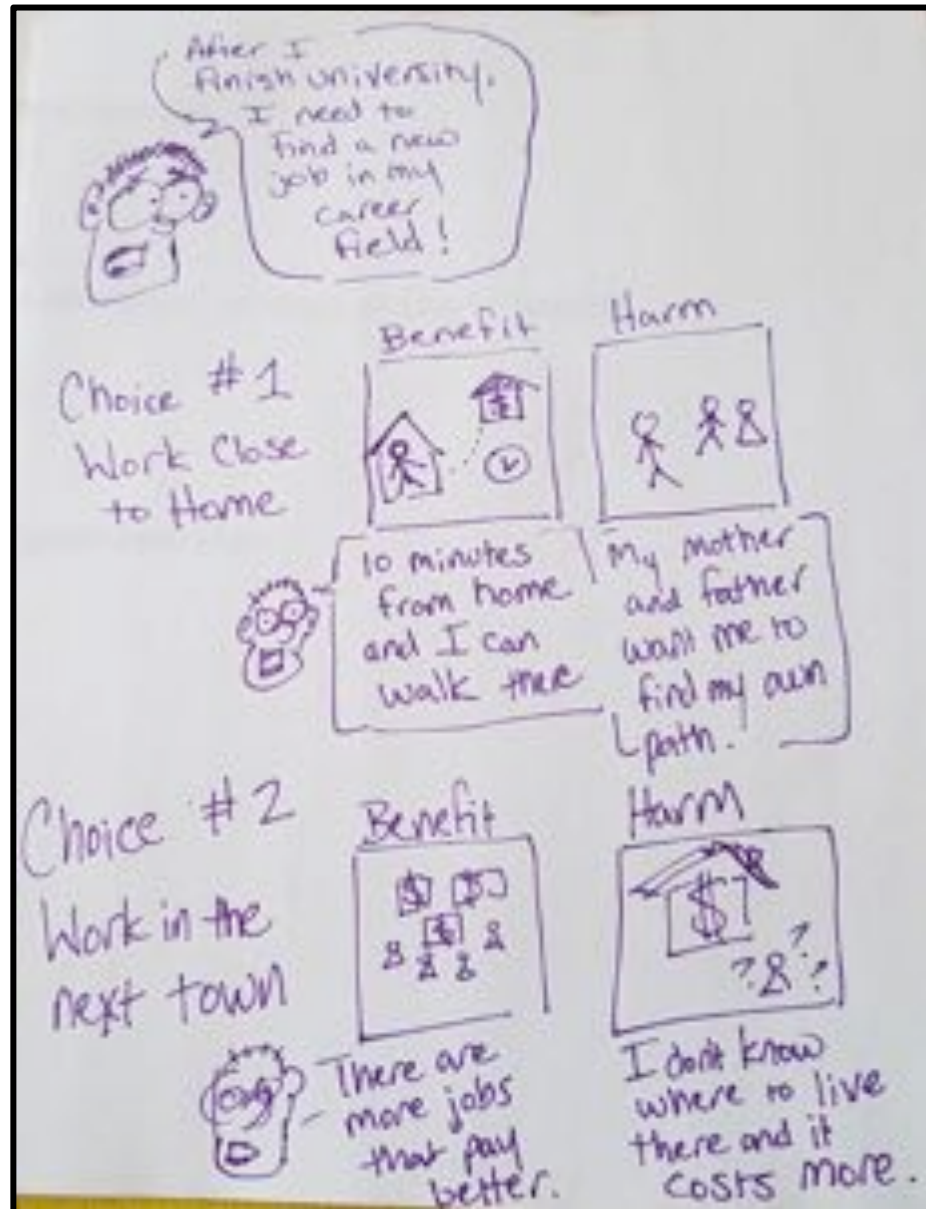


Predict Possible Outcomes

**Ask students to include
a panel that includes
their decision**




Predict Possible Outcomes

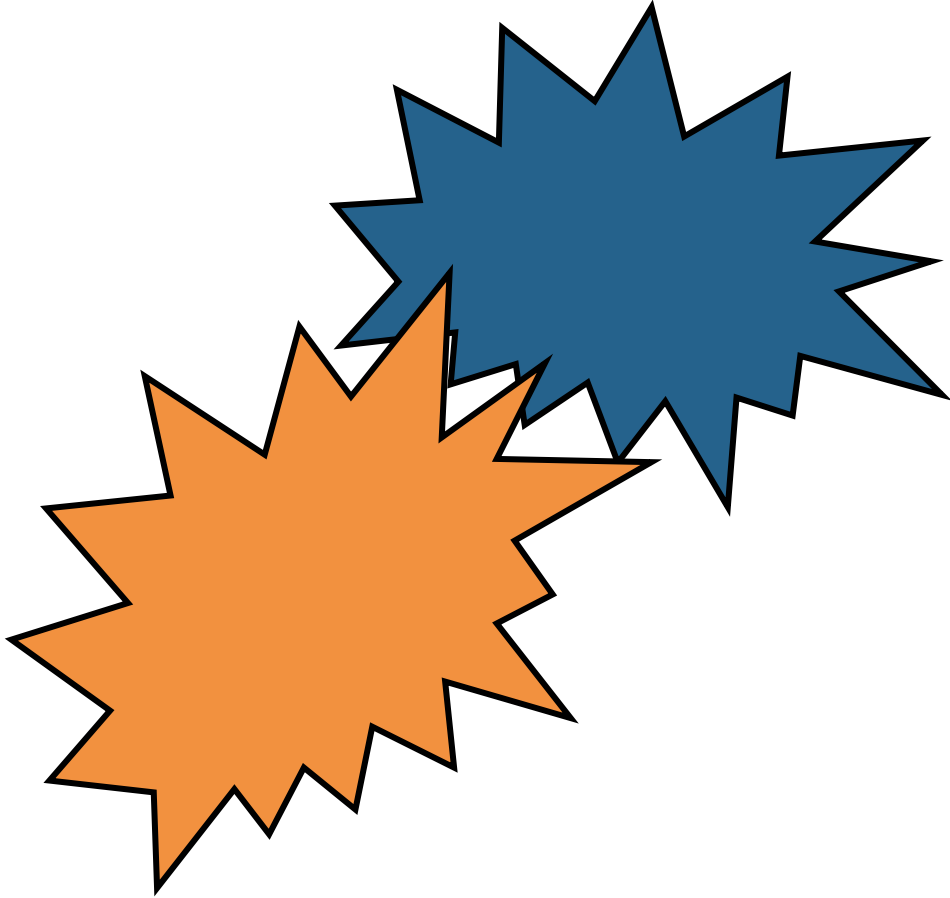


So I will...

Work close to home so I can save enough [\$\$\$] to move to the next town!

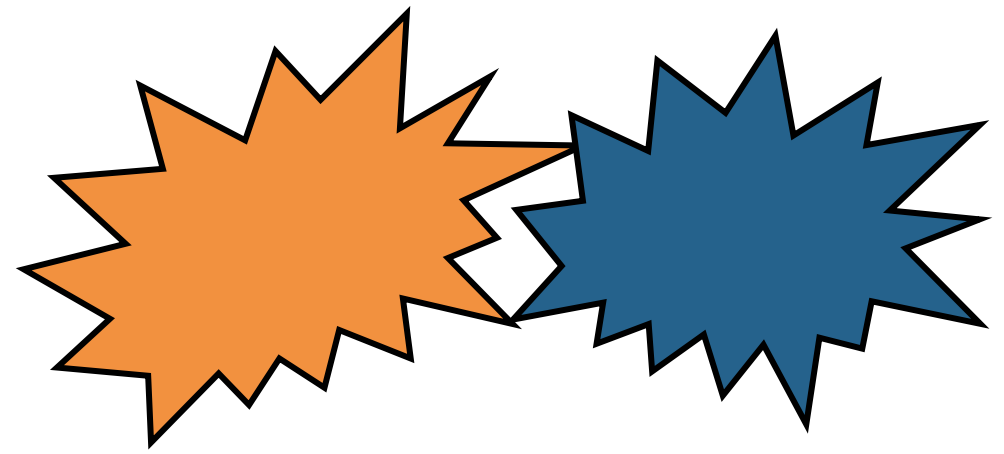


QUESTION!



How might students
practice their listening
skills and create comics at
the same time?

QUESTION!



What subjects or topics might your students make comics about?

Questions to Consider:

How might you use your experiences with comic books in your teaching?

How might you provide opportunities for students to practice both writing and drawing comics?

How might you add a comic book creating activity or assessment to one of your current lessons?



Three Big Points About Creating Comics

1. Creating comics challenges students to think in different ways
2. There are many ways to practice English language skills through creating comics
3. There are many, many ways to create comics and they are all correct.



Thank you!

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